



PHOTO BY AIRMAN ERIK CARDENAS

Two representatives from each of Cannon's first responder units stand in formation in their operational field gear. They salute as the flag is lowered during a special retreat to honor the men and women who responded to the accident scenes on Sept. 11, 2001.

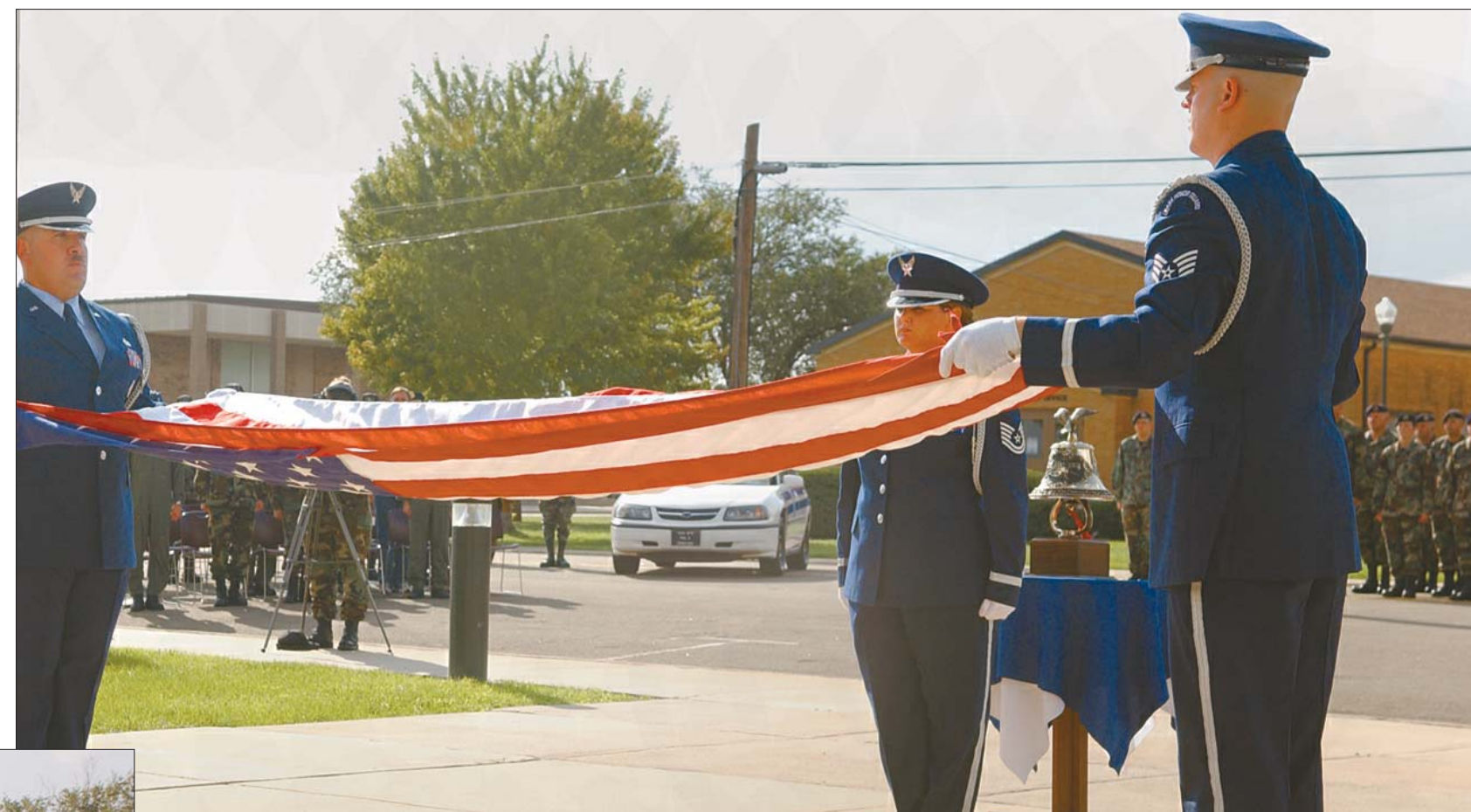


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Tech. Sgt. Amy Bengry (center) presides as the non-commissioned officer in charge of the honor guard ceremony while Master Sgt. Eric Butt (left) and Staff Sgt. Ross Lindeman fold the flag. Cannon's Assistant Fire Chief Bruce Ford rang a fire bell 15 times to honor the loss of first responders on the fifth anniversary of 9-11.

Remembering 9-11

Cannon community pauses to renew, strengthen resolve



(Editor's note: The following remarks were made by Col. Scott West, 27th Fighter Wing commander to members of the Cannon community during a remembrance ceremony on Monday.)

Five years ago on Sept. 11, 2001, innocent men, women and children were murdered by terrorists. Nearly 3,000 people of multiple nationalities were killed that day. I think most of us watched as our World Trade Center, Pentagon and the fields of western Pennsylvania became hollowed ground. As the attacks unfolded, I think we experienced the same fear, confusion, anger and sadness. But over time, those feelings evolved to include gratitude, respect and ultimately, resolve ... in large part, due to the heroism of our nation's first responders.

Many survived the attacks in New York and Washington by quickly exiting burning structures, and many more survived because of the actions of police, fire and medical professionals. Five years ago, extraordinary heroes entered the same structures others were fleeing. They entered in order to save lives, and in doing so, many gave their own. That day's tragedy unified America. The resolve of our first responders became the resolve of a nation.

Since then, nearly 1.3 million American troops have

deployed to the Gulf Region in support of Operations ENDURING FREEDOM and IRAQI FREEDOM. These men and women have voluntarily put their lives at risk to protect the freedoms we enjoy.

Today, we are approaching the same number murdered five years ago, 3000, of Soldiers, Sailors, Marines and Airmen who have given their lives in the Gulf Region. So, this week we pause to reflect not only on the tragic loss of life in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania, but to pay tribute to those who have given their lives since. Their sacrifices should strengthen our resolve.

Remember that we were attacked by terrorists who took advantage of an American value — our freedom — specifically, the freedom to travel — and used it to murder the innocent.

But because of the resolve of our first responders, like those in our security forces squadron, fire department and medical group, and the continued resolve of our military, like those 27th Fighter Wing troops deployed today, our freedom, once used to rob families of fathers, mothers, sons and daughters, is still intact, and more importantly, still worth fighting for.

This week, let's renew and strengthen our resolve to protect the freedom we cherish and honor those who died to preserve it.



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After the flag was lowered and the bell rung, the crowd held a moment of silence while 2nd Lt. Troy Lane of the Cannon Honor Guard played Taps on his bugle.



PHOTO BY TECH. SGT. SCOTT MACKAY

The Cannon Honor Guard lowers the flag in a special retreat on Sept. 11. that included three formations consisting of the aSecurity Forces squadron, Medical Group and Fire Department.